

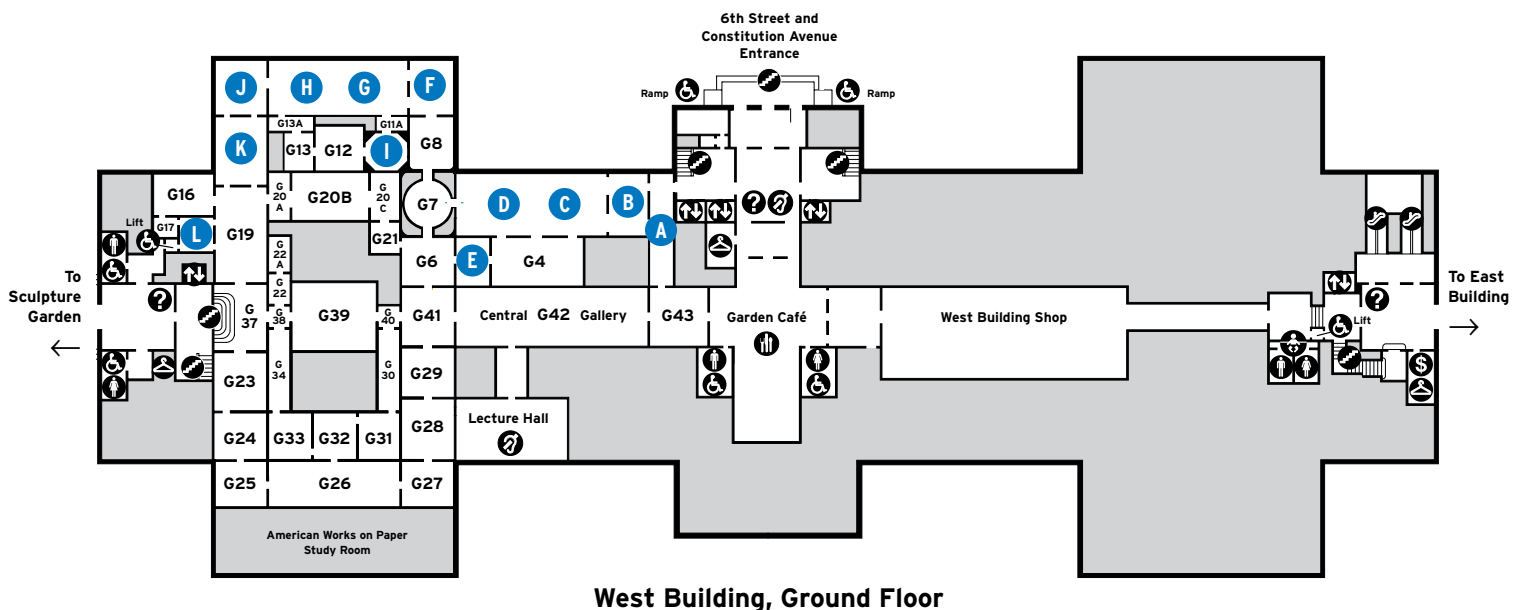
# West Building Sculpture Highlights



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This short tour details highlights of the sculpture collection, with information on the reverse of this sheet. Note that some works of art may be temporarily off view, so please enjoy the other works on display. Do not touch works of art; maintain a one-foot distance.

- A** Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Diana of the Tower*, conceived 1892/1893, cast 1899 [Gallery 1](#)
- B** Auguste Rodin, *Katherine Seney Simpson (Mrs. John W. Simpson)*, 1902–1903 [Gallery 2](#)
- C** Edgar Degas, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen* (wax statue), 1878–1881 [Gallery 3](#)
- D** Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, *Allegory of Africa*, 1863/1865 [Gallery 3](#)
- E** Paul Gauguin, *Père Paillard*, 1902 [Gallery 5](#)
- F** Pietro Magni, *The Reading Girl (La Leggitrice)*, model 1856, carved 1861 [Gallery 9](#)
- G** Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Monsignor Francesco Barberini*, c. 1623 [Gallery 10](#)
- H** Angelo de Rossi, *The Agony in the Garden*, c. 1700 [Gallery 10](#)
- I** Philippe-Laurent Roland, *Thérèse-Françoise Potain Roland, Wife of the Sculptor*, c. 1782/1783 [Gallery 11](#)
- J** Andrea Briosco, called Riccio, *The Entombment*, 1500/1530 [Gallery 14](#)
- K** Andrea del Verrocchio, *Putto Poised on a Globe*, probably 1480 [Gallery 15](#)
- L** French 13th Century, *Pyx in the Form of a Dove*, c. 1220/1230 [Gallery 18](#)



West Building, Ground Floor

## LESS THAN AN HOUR?

# West Building Sculpture Highlights

### **A** Augustus Saint-Gaudens

*Diana of the Tower*,  
conceived 1892/1893, cast 1899

#### **Gallery 1**

The strong outline of Saint-Gaudens' design for a weathervane for Madison Square Garden would have stood out atop New York City's then-highest building. The sculptor's model (and mistress) posed as the Roman goddess of the hunt, whose strength and grace made her an appropriate symbol for a sports venue. Saint-Gaudens cast smaller versions — such as this one — to sell widely.

### **B** Auguste Rodin

*Katherine Seney Simpson*  
(Mrs. John W. Simpson), 1902–1903

#### **Gallery 2**

Mrs. Simpson was the first American to commission her portrait from Rodin. She acquired many of his sculptures over time and later donated them to the National Gallery. By carving her eyes with a distant gaze, and tilting her head and shoulders off-center, Rodin portrayed her as an introspective, intelligent woman. In 1914 she wrote to Rodin that the sculpture was “the most precious thing I own.” Gallery 1C houses the plaster study of her face.

### **C** Edgar Degas

*Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*  
(wax statue), 1878–1881

#### **Gallery 3**

One of the many poor girls who danced for the Paris Opéra, Marie van Goethem stands with head high, arms tautly stretched behind her. Degas dressed her image, the only sculpture he ever exhibited publicly, in cloth garments and human hair. This famous figure and others he modeled in mixed media, many on view in Galleries 3 and 4, were cast in bronze after his death.

### **D** Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi

*Allegory of Africa*, 1863/1865

#### **Gallery 3**

A few years before Bartholdi designed the Statue of Liberty (*Liberty Enlightening the World*, 1869/1870–1886), he won a commission for a fountain honoring a French admiral. Destroyed in 1940, but known from photographs, it included reclining figures symbolizing

the continents. This bronze is a reduction of “Africa.” Even on a small scale, the bronze conveys the strength and burning sadness of the large sandstone original.

### **E** Paul Gauguin

*Père Paillard*, 1902

#### **Gallery 5**

Late in his short life, Gauguin moved to the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia. The artist displayed this satiric figure outside his house near the Catholic mission. In the small village, the subject of the devil-horned totem was clear: he was the hypocritical French bishop (“Lewd Father,” loosely translated) who decried lechery while enjoying affairs with several women. The eyes and the name once glittered with gold-colored paint.

### **F** Pietro Magni

*The Reading Girl (La Leggitrice)*,  
model 1856, carved 1861

#### **Gallery 9**

The content of the book balanced on the back of the woven cane chair has drawn a tear from its reader. A poem once attached to the open pages foretold Italian independence, represented by the medallion of Garibaldi around the girl's neck. Simple garments identify her as an ordinary person rather than the classical heroine typical of formal exhibition sculptures of the time.

### **G** Gian Lorenzo Bernini

*Monsignor Francesco Barberini*,  
c. 1623

#### **Gallery 10**

The subject of this bust, the uncle and mentor of Bernini's patron Pope Urban VIII, had died long before it was commissioned. Bernini studied a painting and brought the old man virtually to life in marble, subtly turning his shoulders and carving his pliant, bearded face above a crinkly linen surplice.

### **H** Angelo de Rossi

*The Agony in the Garden*, c. 1700

#### **Gallery 10**

In the background amid delicate low-relief palms and clouds, Judas betrays Christ to Roman soldiers. The workmanship of this copper relief achieves a

refinement that was more customary for objects made of gold or silver. Much of the image was created by hammering from the back. The high-relief angels were added separately.

### **I** Philippe-Laurent Roland

*Thérèse-Françoise Potain Roland*,  
*Wife of the Sculptor*, c. 1782/1783

#### **Gallery 11**

Because moist clay lends itself to subtle modeling before it is fired to become terracotta (baked clay), sculptors used it for finished works as well as preliminary models. Here, Roland heightened his wife's grace by turning her face to the left and dipping her neckline on the right.

### **J** Andrea Briosco, called Riccio

*The Entombment*, 1500/1530

#### **Gallery 14**

Resembling Roman funerary sculpture, this relief depicts a procession with several almost freestanding figures. Expressing the enormity of their grief, the mourners wail, collapse, or hold their heads as they accompany Christ to the tomb. The largest relief Riccio ever made, perhaps intended for his own tomb, it ranks among the most important Renaissance sculptures in this country.

### **K** Andrea del Verrocchio

*Putto Poised on a Globe*, probably 1480

#### **Gallery 15**

With cheeks puffed out and hair blowing, Verrocchio's infant balances on one foot in a pose that invites examination from multiple viewpoints. Modeled over a metal armature, the figure is fashioned of clay that was then allowed to dry instead of being fired in a kiln. This work may have been a study for a bronze fountain figure.

### **L** French 13th Century

*Pyx in the Form of a Dove*,  
c. 1220/1230

#### **Gallery 18**

Suspended above a church altar and intended to hold consecrated bread for the mass, this pyx, or ritual container, symbolized the dove of the Holy Spirit. Such vessels were made from only the most precious materials — gold, silver, or fine gilded and enameled copper, as in this example.